BOROUGH OF BEWDLEY.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

Medical Officer of Health

FOR

1914.

BEWDLEY:
W. E. TOLLEY, PRINTER, 29, LOAD STREET.

TO THE

Town Council of Bewdley.

BEWDLEY,
MARCH, 1915.

GENTLEMEN,

Physical Features of the Borough.

The Borough of Bewdley is situated on the West bank of the River Severn and the slopes which rise sharply from it.

Population.

The population was 2,745 at the last Census, and is probably about stationary.

Social Conditions.

The chief local industries are Agriculture and the Timber trade, there are also a small Tanyard and Brass Foundry. In addition a large number of people work at the Carpet and Spinning Factories at Kidderminster, and there are an increasing number of men and boys who work at the Coal mines at Kinlet and Highley.

Wages vary from the fairly high level of the skilled artisan and collier to the low level of the agricultural and casual labourer, but probably they average not more than a pound a week.

It is satisfactory to be able to report that so far the War has not produced any large amount of distress in the district, in spite of the fact that work was very short in Kidderminster in the early days, and the rise in prices of food and coal.

This is partly accounted for by the number of men who have enlisted from the Borough, (there were 382 men serving in various branches of His Majesty's Forces at the end of January 1915) many of whom were

married men with families, who are better off on the separation allowance than if the father had been at home on short work, and partly to the fact that the early months of the winter have been warm and open, though wet, and out-of-door work has not been much interfered with by the weather.

Great advantage has also been taken of the old-established custom of the owners of the woodlands and those who have bought the timber allowing the people to gather the waste wood in the forest for their own use. Thus an almost inexhaustable supply of free fuel has been provided, which has been of the greatest benefit to the poorer classes.

There can be no doubt however that the house-wifes of the Borough must have exercised the greatest care and economy to have so greatly avoided the appeal to charitable funds, which was so anxiously expected and so generously provided for.

Water Supply.

The Town Water has been analysed both chemically and bacteriologically and pronounced satisfactory.

Alterations and additions at the Waterworks Pumping Station have been carried out, to meet the increased demand caused by the supply of water to Stourport and Wribbenhall, comprising a New Engine House, Pump, Gas Engines, and Suction Gas Plant.

The New Pump (ram and bucket type) is capable of lifting into the resevoir at Mount Pleasant 20,000 gallons per hour, pumping direct from the bore hole. It is driven by belt from the new Gas Engine, which is served from the Suction Gas Plant.

A small Suction Gas Plant has also been put down to serve two new Gas Engines which have been fixed in place of the two small Oil Engines, to run the pumps which supply the higher level resevoir at Long Bank.

The whole of the new plant has been fixed and the work completed, and, since October 31st, has pumped the quantity of water required.

Sewerage.

In consequence of the expense of installing this new plant the Sewering of Bark Hill has not been proceeded with, and the rest of the sewers of the town remain as before, as also does the amount of river pollution.

River Pollution.

Closet Accommodation.

There are now 315 Water Closets in the town, 94 Pail Closets, and 130 Middens, five of the latter having been converted into Pail Closets during the year.

Scavenging.

This is carried out by the Corporation workmen. There is a great lack of proper accommodation for house refuse. I would suggest that, where there is no fixed receptacle already in existence, the Council should insist on proper sanitary dustbins being provided.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.

Since my last report 95 houses have been inspected under the Housing and Town Planning Act by the Sanitary Inspector and myself, and the results entered in the Record Book. Most of the houses inspected only require minor repairs to put them in a satisfactory condition, and in no case will closing be absolutely necessary. The chief defects found were dampness, generally due to defective roofs and spouting, insufficient or defective closet accommodation, and absence of proper receptacles for house refuse.

During the inspection one case of over-crowding was met with.

In addition 496 inspections were made during the year by the Sanitary Inspector, sometimes accompanied by the Medical Officer, 237 notices were served, written or verbal, and 32 statutory notices were served.

House Accommodation.

During the year four houses have been closed, two new houses built, four made fit for habitation, and in seven cases the work of making houses fit for habitation is now in hand.

Some of these have been before the Sanitary Committee for a very long time and given it a great deal of trouble, and it is satisfactory that their patience has been rewarded by the houses being made habitable rather than by their being closed and demolished.

The Sub-Committee appointed to investigate the housing conditions of the Borough, after careful consideration, have formed the conclusion that "the working class dwellings in the Borough are sufficient for the needs of the population." They point out that "many of the dwellings are old, but considerably more roomy than dwellings of more recent construction, and recommend that steps should be taken to induce the owners to carry out such improvements as may be thought desirable to bring such dwellings up to the standard of modern requirements."

This is gradually being done under pressure brought under the Housing and Town Planning Act.

They also point out that "at the present time several of the dwellings are occupied by Colliers engaged in the mining industries of South Shropshire, and it is anticipated that, when other houses are provided in the vicinity of their work, they will leave the Borough, into which some of them have recently come to reside from outside districts."

Schools. The two Schools in the Borough are both in a most satisfactory sanitary condition.

Milk Supply. The milk supply is fairly satisfactory, and the cowhouses and milk shops are regularly inspected.

Slaughter Houses These remain as before.

Other Foods. No case has arisen under the Food and Drugs Act.

Workshops' Act. There are 23 Workshops on the register, including five Bakehouses. 47 inspections were made during the year, nine Sanitary defects were found, five written notices served, and five defects have been remedied.

Infectious Diseases.

During the year one case of Scarlet Fever was notified, which was isolated at home. Four cases of Erysipelas were notified. Six cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were notified, five of them in children by the School Medical Officer, and two of other forms of Tuberculosis. The one adult case of Pulmonary Tuberculosis is being treated at the Welland Sanatorium.

During the year there were notified seven cases of Diphtheria, a disease from which the Borough is usually free.

The cases occurred over a very scattered area, three of them being in the most outlying parts of the Borough, two in Lax Lane, and two in Dog Lane.

Only one of the cases was fatal, a child brought home from the Hop Country suffering from the disease.

The Corporation has decided for the future to supply Diphtheria Anti toxin free to those patients who cannot afford to pay for it.

There was a severe outbreak of Measles in the Summer months, causing four deaths.

The Lax Lane Infant School was closed from July 6th, to 31st, all the Schools from July 27th to 31st, and again from Aug. 11th, to 28th, and the Wyre Hill School from Nov. 2nd, to 16th, owing to a later outbreak.

Death Rate.

There were 38 deaths registered in the Borough during the year, giving a rate of 13·47 per 1,000 of the population.

Of these there were:

Under	1	year					4
Over	1	„	and under	5	years		7
„	5	„	„	„	15	„	4
„	15	„	„	„	25	„	None
„	25	„	„	„	65	„	11
Over	65						12
							38

Two deaths of non-residents were notified in the Borough, and 11 deaths of residents of the Borough took place in Public Institutions outside the Borough.

This gives a nett death rate of 47 or 17·11 per 1,000 of the population.

The factor for obtaining the standardized death rate is ·8615, the standardized rate is therefore 14·74 per 1,000. This rate is the one which may be compared with that in other districts where differences of age and sex constitution of the population are taken into consideration.

The death rate is rather high this year, but I can see no particular reason to account for it.

There were only four deaths of infants under 1 year of age, giving a rate of 63 per 1,000 children born, a very satisfactory rate.

Birth Rate. There were 63 births registered during the year, giving a rate of 22·95 per 1,000 of the population.

Tables of vital statistics are appended.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

U. W. N. MILES,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each year.	Births.			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths.		Nett Deaths Belonging to the District.			
		Uncorrected Number.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	Of Non-residents registered in the District.	Of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 Year.		At all Ages.	
			Number.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.
1909	2866	74	74	25·81	37	12·87		2	6	81	39	13·60
1910	2866	61	61	21·28	43	15		7	10	163	50	17·09
1911	2866	74	74	26·95	33	12·02		10	5	67	42	15·26
1912	2745	54	54	19·66	31	11·29	1	10	5	92	41	14·93
1913	2745	71	71	29·5	30	10·92	2	6	6	84	34	12·38
1914	2745	63	63	22·95	38	13 47	2	11	4	63	47	17·11

Total population at all ages, 2745. Total families or separate occupiers, 665, at Census, 1911.
Area of District in acres (land and inland water) 2,105.

TABLE II.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1914.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.						
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.					
		1 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 45 years	45 and under 65 years	65 and upwards.
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup)	7	3	4				
Erysipelas ..	4				2	1	1
Scarlet Fever ..	1		1				
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ..	6	3	2	1			
Other forms of Tuberculosis ..	2	1	1				
Totals ..	20	7	8	1	2	1	1

Kidderminster Borough Isolation Hospital.

Worcester County Tuberculous Sanatoria.

TABLE III.

Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1914.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	All Ages.	Under 1 year	1 and under 2 years	2 and under 5 years	5 and under 15 years	15 and under 25 years	25 and under 45 years	45 and under 65 years	65 and upwards.
Measles . .	4		3	1					
Diphtheria and Croup . .	1			1					
Influenza . .	1								1
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	2					1		1	
Other Tuberculous Diseases	2			1	1				
Cancer, malignant disease	6							3	3
Organic Heart Disease	3							2	1
Bronchitis . .	5	1					1	1	2
Pneumonia (all forms)	1						1		
Other diseases of respiratory organs	2				1				1
Diarrhœa and Enteritis	1				1				
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	3			1	1	1			
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	2						2		
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth . .	3	2		1					
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide . .	1			1					
Other Defined Diseases . .	10	1						2	7
Totals . .	47	4	3	6	4	2	4	9	15

TABLE IV.

Infant Mortality during the Year 1914.

Causes of Death.	Under 1 week.	Total under 4 weeks.	6 months and under 9 months.	9 months and under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
Convulsions ..			1		1
Bronchitis ..				1	1
Premature Birth	1	1			1
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus	1	1			1
Totals ..	2	2	1	1	4

Nett Births in the Year .. Legitimate, 63.

Nett Deaths in the Year .. Legitimate, 4.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises.	Number of	
	Inspections.	Written Notices.
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries)	47	5
Total ..	47	5

2.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars.	Number of Defects.	
	Found.	Remedied.
Want of Cleanliness ..	5	3
Want of Ventilation ..	1	
Overcrowding	1	1
Other Nuisances	1	
Sanitary Accommodation:		
Unsuitable or Defective ..	1	1
Total ..	9	5

4.—Registered Workshops.

Workshops on the Register at the end of the year.	Number.
Workshops and Workplaces	23
Workshop Bakehouses	5
Total Number of Workshops on Register ..	28